AERS

AERS

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS & RURAL SOCIOLOGY
The Ohio State University
2120 Fyffe Road
Columbus, Ohio 43210

THE RURAL TURNAROUND IN OHIO: 1970 to 1975

Donald W. Thomas

ESS No. 560

November, 1977

Department of Agricultural Economics & Rural Sociology
Ohio Agricultural Research & Development Center
The Ohio State University
Columbus, Ohio 43210

RURAL TURNAROUND IN OHIO: 1970 to 1975

Introduction

Early in this decade, evidence became available that suggested the emergence of a new trend in population growth and migration for certain areas of the United States. U. S. Census Bureau estimates, first analyzed by Beale (1975), showed nonmetropolitan counties in the nation growing faster than metropolitan counties. This represented a reversal from the trends of previous decades.

The initial reaction to this analysis was that this was probably "...just an increased rate of sprawl out of metropolitan areas into adjacent nonmetropolitan territories." (Beale, 1976:954) There was evidence that several metropolitan areas had been experiencing considerable decentralization of population beyond the suburbs and into the rural-urban fringe. Countering this explanation, however, was the observation of growth in previous no-growth areas such as the Ozarks, Northern New England, the Upper Great Lakes, portions of the Appalachian and Blue Ridge Mountain regions and areas in the Rocky Mountain West. (Beale, 1976:956)

Table 1. Population Change and Net Migration by Metropolitan Status, United States, 1970-1975

	Percent Population Change		Percent Net Migration	
	1970-75	1960-70	1970-75	1960-70
Total U. S.	4.8	13.4	1.2	1.7
Metropolitan Counties	4.1	17.0	.4	4.7
Nonmetropolitan Counties	6.6	4.4	3.4	-5.7
Adjacent Counties	7.3	7.3	4.1	-2.7
Nonadjacent Counties	5.9	1.4	2.7	-8.7
Entirely Rural Counties	7.0	-4.2	4.9	-12.2

SOURCE: Beale, 1977

Further analysis of available data by Beale refuted the "decentralization" explanation as the sole reason for the increased nonmetropolitan growth. Table 1 shows nonmetropolitan counties with a higher growth rate and a substantial edge in net migration during the 1970's, which is a reversal from the 1960's. The further breakdown of nonmetropolitan counties into those adjacent to metropolitan areas versus those farther removed illustrates the expanded nature of the current rural growth. While the adjacent counties have grown as much in the first five years of the 1970's as they did in the total decade of the sixties, the nonadjacent counties, in relative terms, have experienced a much greater

change. Further, separating out tne entirely rural counties (those with no village or town of 2,500 population or more) provides more evidence of the current rural turnaround. These rural counties which lost population at the rate of 4.2 percent in the 1960's have grown by 7.0 percent so far in this decade. The net migration figures solidify this trend.

One bit of additional evidence was provided by Beale (1977) when he cross-classified nonmetropolitan counties by growth rates and population density. The greatest percentage increase was found in counties with the least density (under 10 people per square mile). These same counties had lost population in the 1960's.

The Situation in Ohio

In an effort to determine if areas in Ohio were experiencing population change similar to the national trends, changes in county populations were analyzed.

Ohio counties were first sorted as metropolitan and nonmetropolitan using the official designation of the Census Bureau of Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area (SMSA) or non-SMSA. SMSA's are composed of a central county, which contains a major city, plus additional adjacent counties which are considered to be closely tied, in economic terms, to the central county. Past experience has shown differences in population growth patterns for the

core counties, many of which have undergone decline, than for the fringe counties, which have gained through decentralization. Thus, the core and fringe counties were separated for analysis.

It might also be hypothesized that the size of the metropolitan county would be related to population change. In the 1960's, the larger SMSA's (as a group) had lower growth rates than did the smaller areas. Thus, Ohio's metropolitan core counties were divided into three size groups, as were their associated fringe counties.

A similar distinction was made for the nonmetropolitan counties in the state. These 49 counties were divided on the basis of the size of the largest place in the county. The categories consisted of counties whose largest place was over 10,000 in population, those 2,500 to 10,000 and those counties with no urban place.

The full set of categories is as follows:[1/]

Metropolitan

Core -- The counties containing the central city of an SMSA

Large -- SMSA's of 1,000,000 or more

Medium -- SMSA's of 250,000 to 999,999

Small -- SMSA's under 250,000

Fringe -- The noncore SMSA counties

Large -- Fringe counties of SMSA's of 1,000,000 or more

1/ For a similar use of core and size categories, see Fuguitt (1976).

Medium -- Fringe counties of SMSA's of 250,000 to 999,999

Small -- Fringe counties of SMSA's under 250,000

Nonmetropolitan

SLP 10,000+ -- Counties where the largest urban place is over 10,000

SLP 2,500 - 9,999 -- Counties where the largest urban place is 2,500 to 9,999

SLP under 2,500 -- Counties with no urban places

Table 2 presents the full set of data for Ohio's counties, including total population, net migration,[2/] percent change and percent net migration for the 1960 to 1970 and 1970 to 1975 periods.

Table 3 simplifies the population change and net migration rates by placing them on an annual basis. For example, the total rates for the 1970 to 1975 period have been divided by 5 and the 1960 to 1970 rates have been divided by 10. This allows a more accurate comparison of population change and net migration.

Figure 1 depicts in graphic form the population change rates for the various county groups and Figure 2 does the same for net migration rates.

2/ Population growth is the result of natural increases and net migration. Natural increase is obtained by subtracting the deaths that occur during a given time from the births that occur. Net migration is the difference between the number of people who move into an area and the number who move out. In this analysis we are analyzing total population change and net migration as a major component of that change.

Table 2. Population and Net Migration, 1970-1975 and 1960-1970, by Metropolitan and Nonmetropolitan Status, Ohio

	No. Counties	Population			Percent Change		Net Migration		Percent Net Migration	
		1975	1970	1960	1970-75	1960-70	1970-75	1960-70	1970-75	1960-70
State Total	88	10,759,000	10,657,423	9,706,397	1.0	9.8	-281,100	-129,315	- 2.6	- 1.3
Metropolitan[1]	39	8,608,400	8,596,388	7,744,674	0.1	11.0	-298,600	- 47,204	- 3.5	- 0.6
Core	16	6,972,100	7,069,356	6,462,228	- 1.4	9.4	-339,400	-132,234	- 4.8	- 2.0
Large	3	3,375,000	3,480,028	3,194,939	- 3.0	8.9	-214,200	- 82,788	- 6.2	- 2.6
Medium	7	2,804,500	2,811,512	2,564,431	- 0.2	9.6	-110,200	- 45,896	- 3.9	- 1.8
Small	6	792,600	777,816	702,858	1.9	10.7	- 15,000	- 3,550	- 1.9	- 0.5
Fringe	23	1,636,300	1,527,032	1,282,446	7.2	19.1	40,800	85,030	2.7	6.6
Large	9	778,100	708,369	570,196	9.8	24.2	34,700	56,432	4.9	9.9
Medium	9	641,200	608,325	505,354	5.4	20.4	5,300	40,912	0.9	8.1
Small	5	217,000	210,338	206,896	3.2	1.7	800	- 12,314	0.4	- 6.0
Nonmetropolitan	49	2,150,700	2,061,035	1,961,723	4.4	5.1	17,500	- 82,111	0.8	- 4.2
SLP 10,000+ [2]	26	1,595,500	1,545,979	1,454,677	3.2	6.3	- 5,100	- 48,683	- 0.3	- 3.3
SLP 2,500-9,999	19	497,800	463,876	453,061	7.3	2.4	17,500	- 27,922	3.8	- 6.2
SLP under 2,500	4	57,400	51,180	53,985	12.2	5.2	5,100	- 5,506	10.0	-10.2

1/ Metropolitan definition as of 1974.
2/ SLP = Size of Largest Place.

SOURCES: Data aggregated from county data.
1975 population and 1970-1975 net migration from: U. S. Bureau of the Census, Estimates of the Population of Ohio Counties, Series P-26, No. 75-35, September 1976.

1960 and 1970 population from: U. S. Bureau of the Census, Number of Inhabitants, PC(1)-A37.

1960-1970 net migration from: USDA, Economic Research Service, Net Migration of the Population, 1960-70, Population-Migration Report, Part 2, 1975.

Table 3. Average Annual Population Change and Net Migration, Ohio, 1960-1970 and 1970-1975

	Average Annual Percent Population Change		Average Annual Percent Net Migration	
	1970-75	1960-70	1970-75	1960-70
State Total	.20	.98	- .52	- .13
Metropolitan	.02	1.10	- .70	- .06
Core	- .28	.94	- .96	- .20
Large	- .60	.89	-1.24	- .26
Medium	- .04	.96	- .78	- .18
Small	.38	1.07	- .38	- .05
Fringe	1.44	1.91	.54	.66
Large	1.96	2.42	.98	.99
Medium	1.08	2.04	.18	.81
Small	.64	.17	.08	- .60
Nonmetropolitan	.88	.51	.16	- .42
SLP 10,000+	.64	.63	- .06	- .33
SLP 2,500-9,999	1.46	.24	.78	- .62
SLP under 2,500	2.44	- .52	2.00	-1.02

SOURCE: See Table 2.

FIGURE 1. Average Annual Percent Population Change

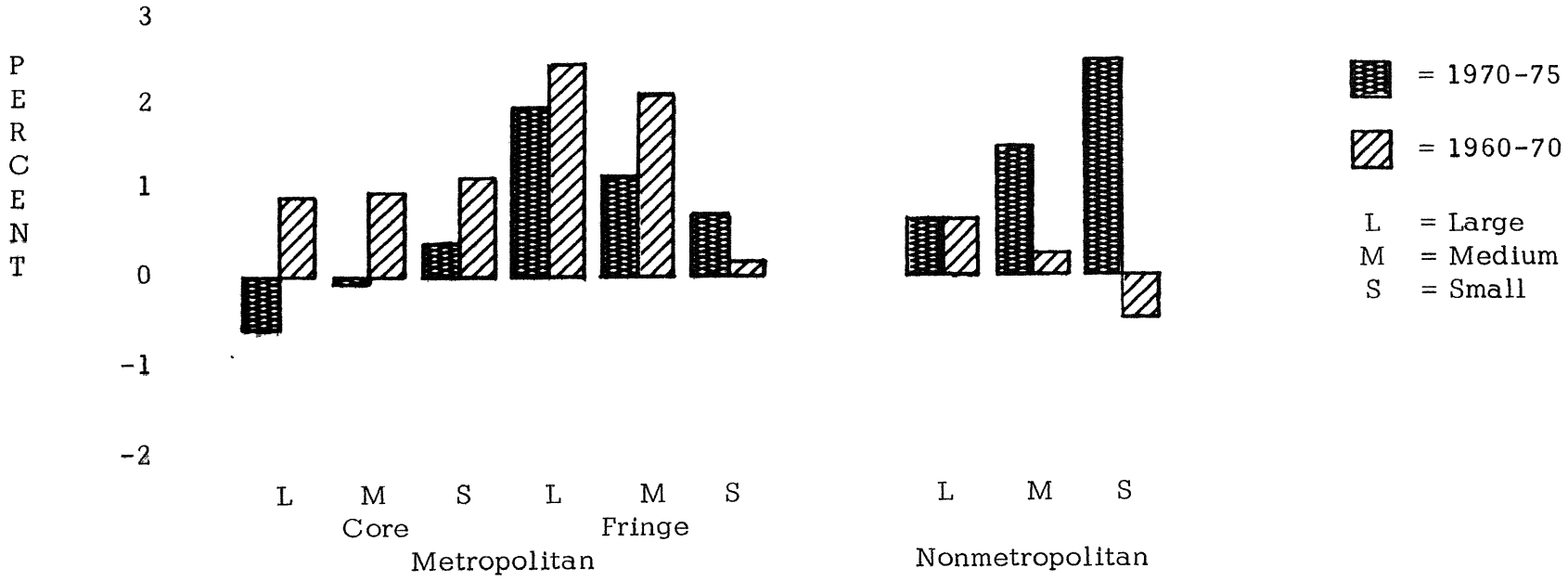
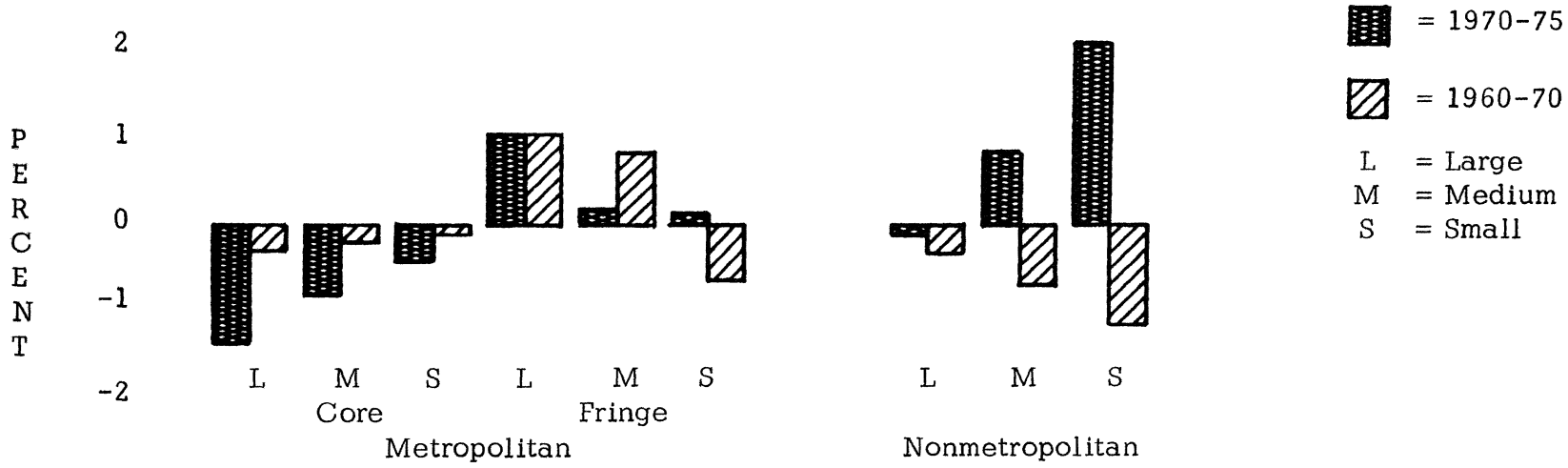


FIGURE 2. Average Annual Percent Net Migration



State Totals

Total population growth has slowed considerably in Ohio in recent years. The average growth rate of nearly one percent per year in the 1960's has dropped to 0.2 percent. Correspondingly, the net rate of out-migration from Ohio has gone up four times (-.13 to -.52). In absolute terms, the state had a net loss through migration of 129,315 people in the 1960's and has lost slightly over 281,000 persons so far in the 1970's.

But while total change has been low, the change in population of the various county groupings indicates that redistribution has been taking place. Metropolitan counties have remained virtually static in total population since 1970, while nonmetropolitan counties have grown by 4.4 percent. Metropolitan counties have had a net out-migration in this time period (-3.5 percent) as compared to a net in-migration of 0.8 percent for the nonmetropolitan counties.

Analysis of Metropolitan Counties

Table 3 provides a basis for analyzing the various subcategories of metropolitan counties in the state. A major difference in growth patterns is noted by comparing core and fringe counties. The core counties of SMSA's have lost population at the rate of .28 percent per year since 1970, while fringe counties have grown by an annual rate of 1.44 percent. It is not surprising that there is more growth in the fringe counties. In the 1960's, the fringe counties grew faster than core counties, largely through the decentralization of population out from the core cities to the rural-urban fringe. This is

evidenced through migration rates which showed a net out-migration from the cores and a net in-migration to the fringes in that decade. However, it appears that although the annual growth rates of both groupings are lower so far in the seventies, the difference between them has increased. Or, stated another way, growth rates of core metropolitan counties have declined faster than the growth rates of the fringe counties.

Further analysis of core and fringe growth by size of the metropolitan area is also instructive. Among core counties, only the smallest showed population gain. The large counties lost at the rate of .60 percent per year in the five years since 1970 and medium sized counties lost .04 percent annually. Each of these represents a substantial decline from corresponding rates in the decade of the 1960's.

The size relationship is reversed for the fringe counties. Here, the fringes of the larger SMSA's are growing faster than the medium or small areas. However, it is only in the small category that we find faster growth in the seventies than in the sixties. This is further amplified by noting that the fringes of small SMSA's had an annual out-migration rate of .60 in the 1960's compared to a slight in-migration rate of .08 more recently.

Analysis of Nonmetropolitan Counties

When the nonmetropolitan counties are subdivided by the size of the largest place in the county, one gets a more complete picture of the meaning

of the "rural turnaround" in Ohio. From Table 3 and Figures 1 and 2, it is evident that all three classes of nonmetropolitan counties are growing. However, the extent of growth is inverse to the amount of urbanization in the counties. Those nonmetropolitan counties with places of over 10,000 population are growing at nearly the same rate in the 1970's as they did in the 1960's. In the earlier period, however, they were the fastest growing nonmetropolitan counties. In the current period they have shown the least growth.

The most dramatic change is in the counties with no urban population; i.e., the largest place is a village of under 2,500 population. From an average population decline of .52 percent per year in the previous decade, these small counties have shown a reversal and are currently growing at a rate of 2.44 percent per year. In fact, this group shows the highest growth rate of all county groupings, metropolitan or nonmetropolitan. The same pattern is evident with regard to net migration. These totally rural counties had the highest annual rate of net out-migration of all counties in the sixties and show by far the highest rate of net in-migration in the seventies. Comparing all county groupings, only the three categories of metropolitan fringe counties and the two smallest categories of nonmetropolitan counties show a net in-migration in this decade.

A note of caution is due here regarding the magnitude of the population change and net migration in the nonmetropolitan counties. While the change

is significant and impressive, the absolute numbers of people involved must be kept in perspective. The total nonmetropolitan change involves a gain of under 90,000 people in the five years since 1970. In addition, in the high growth counties with no urban population, the total absolute increase was only slightly over 6,200 persons. The point here is that in a county of 10,000 people, for example, a gain of 1,000 population represents a ten percent increase. This increase would be significant for that county and have considerable consequences for it. But one must guard against the impression that the rural turnaround involves a massive draining of Ohio's cities with hordes of migrants lining the highways into the countryside.

Conclusion

The objective of this paper has been to document Ohio's participation in the national trend towards nonmetropolitan growth. The data have convincingly shown that the nonmetropolitan areas of the state have grown at far greater rates than anyone would have predicted, based on previous trends. In fact, it is those rural areas with the poorest growth records and highest rates of out-migration in the past, that are now showing the greatest growth and in-migration. Earlier analysis of individual county population change showed that the Ohio counties most directly involved in this turnaround were the Appalachian counties in southern and eastern Ohio. (Thomas, 1976) In addition, a number of basically

rural agricultural counties in west central Ohio showed evidence of shifting from net out-migration to net in-migration in the current period.

Having documented the trends, crucial and interesting questions are raised. What is behind these trends? Why are people moving to these low density rural counties? And finally, what are the implications of this new growth for the counties and communities involved? At the present time, there is little solid evidence available to answer these questions. A number of research projects are underway in various states, including Ohio, which will give us additional evidence.

Among the hypotheses being tested are suggestions that migration of retirement aged persons to rural areas may have increased. With more aged population today and increased social security and pension benefits, it is possible that more of these people are leaving urban areas after retirement. Also to be considered is the possibility that younger and middle aged urbanites have become disenchanted with the negative aspects of city life such as congestion, pollution, crime, etc. and opted for rural communities. Residential preference studies have shown for a number of years that a majority of urban residents prefer a rural or small town residence. One general theory of migration suggests that the decision to migrate involves a weighing and balancing of positive and negative factors at the current residence against similar factors at potential destinations. (Lee, 1966) It may be that for increasing numbers of people, the negative factors in urban areas have increased

or the attractiveness of rural areas has increased (or both) to the point that the balance has been tipped in favor of rural communities. In line with this hypothesis is the suggestion that something of a "back to the land" movement exists among a portion of city dwellers.

A further hypothesis, not unrelated to the others, is that increased job opportunities now exist in the turnaround areas. These jobs could result from the decentralization of industry or from energy related activities. Certainly coal and the generation of electricity have taken on increased importance in the Appalachian region of Ohio. For those people with a predisposition to migrate, any increase in economic activity in the area could be a facilitating factor in the final decision. It should be recognized that the turnaround areas have sent a relatively large number of migrants to urban areas in past decades. Thus, these people form a large pool of potential return migrants.

Implications

Research is also currently underway which will provide answers to questions concerning the possible implications of the rural turnaround. Certainly, the consequences will depend in part on the characteristics of the migrants. A large number of older retired people, for example, will mean that the receiving areas will have greater need for increased medical facilities and, depending on the status of the retirees, perhaps greater welfare costs. If, on the other hand, the migrants are younger families with children, then we may see substantial effects on school systems and local taxes.

Of perhaps greater significance is the potential for conflict between old and new residents. The migrants may begin demanding services of the type they had become accustomed to in the city, such as community or county water and sewage systems, street lights and sidewalks, newer schools, or larger police or fire departments. If this occurs, it could bring them up against the native population who are content with things the way they are and do not want increased taxes to pay for such services and facilities. Only with the passage of time and as research results accrue, will we be able to say for certain what the balance of positive and negative implications will be.

References

Beale, Calvin L.

1977 "Current Status of the Shift of U. S. Population to Smaller Communities," Paper presented to the Annual Meeting of the Population Association of America, St. Louis, Missouri.

1976 "A Further Look at Nonmetropolitan Population Growth Since 1970," American Journal of Agricultural Economics, Vol. 58, No. 5, December, pp. 953-958.

1975 The Revival of Population Growth in Nonmetropolitan America, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service-605, June.

Fuguitt, Glenn V. and Calvin L. Beale

1976 "Post-1970 Shifts in the Pattern of Population Change in the North Central Region," Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Midwest Sociological Society, St. Louis, Missouri.

Lee, Everett S.

1966 "A Theory of Migration," Demography, Vol. 3, No. 1, pp. 47-57.

Thomas, Donald W.

1976 "Ohio's Population at Mid-Decade," Socio-economic Information for Ohio Agriculture, No. 582, Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology, The Ohio State University, December.